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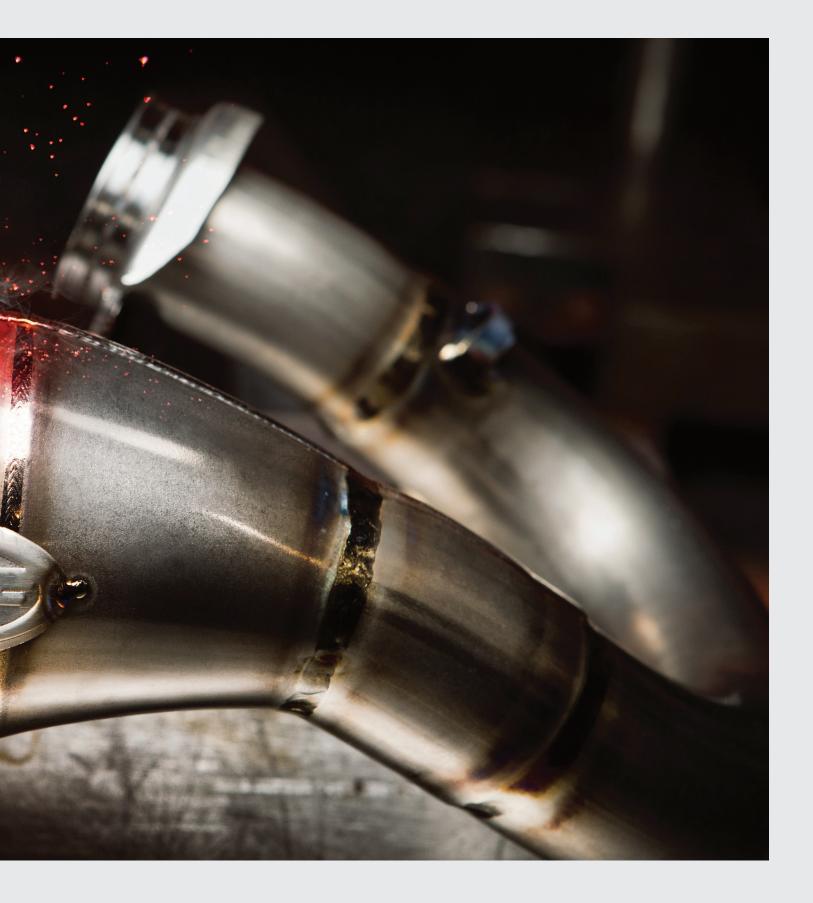












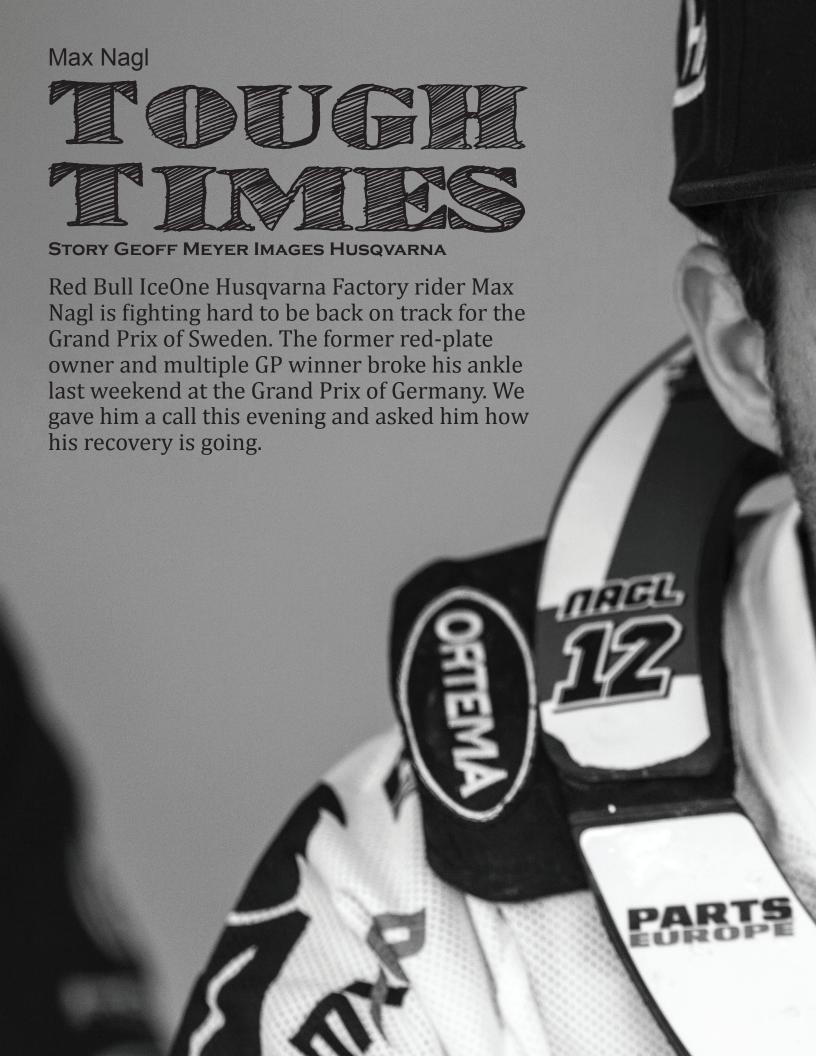
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Motocross Illustrated: Max, first sorry about your injury. How is it going, what have you done to try and be ok for Sweden?

Nagl: I had straight away on Saturday night surgery to put two screws in the broken bone and now I am back home making the therapy to make the healing as fast as possible.

Motocross Illustrated: Do you have any idea if you will be able to race in Sweden?

Nagl: I don't know yet, I have an appointment with Doctor Claes, but in the hospital in Germany they couldn't tell me if I could ride that quickly or not. I will race if I can race with pain killers, but I won't race if I can damage something more.

Motocross Illustrated: What happened, how did you get involved in the accident that injured you?

Nagl: I had a spin in the second jump after the start, but nothing serious, then I got hit really hard by Paulin, and I went to the ground. I was still ok, nothing broken, but then I got hit on the ground by Philippaerts. There was dust and he couldn't see me probably. I knew straight away it was broken, so I went on my bike back to the paddock.

Motocross Illustrated: what was your first thought after the crash?

Nagl: At first I thought my season was over, that was my first thought, but then of course you try and fight back and try and make something from it.

Motocross Illustrated: There have





been a lot of injuries this year, it's been a really competitive season in the MXGP class. Is that the reason for the injuries?

Nagl: It is also that, because it is very competitive, but also one part the tracks are different this year. The first three overseas GP's were prepared well, but since we return to Europe the tracks are different. They are not prepared like before, not ripped and not watered like last year, plus we have a lot of classes riding, maybe too many classes and that makes it difficult for us.

Motocross Illustrated: Seeing somebody like Antonio riding with the injury he has, how much more do you respect somebody who rides against the pain?

Nagl: I always have respect for riders like that, because some riders if they have a small injury they stop and don't want to ride with pain or the injury, then you have the really good riders (like Cairoli) who ride through the pain, they go through it, if it isn't serious you can ride through it.







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CLEMENT DESALLE

CHAMPION IN WAITING

STORY GEOFF MEYER IMAGES RAY ARCHER

Some a riders should have be crowned world motocross champion at least once in his careers, but just doesn't get the luck needed to get the title. In the past it's been men like Sylvain Geboers, Kees Van der Ven and Marniqu Bervoets who should have at least one number one plate in their trophy cabinet.

Clement Desalle might join that list unless his luck begins to change in the near future. It really looked like this 2015 season might be the time for change as he reeled off great ride after great ride.

For a rider with 19 Grand Prix victories it is clear he is special. He has also shown amazing consistency in his championship challenges, but often struggles at some point in the season and it costs him.

In the last six years of racing in the MXGP series he has finished top five on all occasions, finishing fourth in 2014 after picking up an injury and missing four rounds. Prior to 2014 he went 2-2-3-2-3, stunning, but just not good enough to misplace Cairoli at the top of the standings.

The Rockstar Suzuki factory rider had gone 2-2-2-1-3-3-4-4-3-2-5-2-2 in the opening 14 races of the 2015 MXGP championship and he was closing in on the red plate (owned at the time by Max Nagl).

No GP wins in 2015, but consistency that he always needed when racing somebody somebody like Antonio Cairoli. It was looking like finally the tough Belgian had found the formula to be crowned MXGP champion. But life isn't that easy is it?

Always working hard, and the 2015 season





also saw a change in his character, a friendly, more open rider rolled up to the opening Grand Prix of the season. Smiling and laughing throughout the weekend many people were surprised by his new attitude. A happy person usually breeds success and it seemed like Desalle had turned the corner in his attitude to people and his racing.

But luck isn't something that you can control on after looking so strong in those opening 14 moto's, his luck ran out, once again.

Desalle underwent treatment on his right shoulder after a crash at the Grand Prix of France and tried to contest the Grand Prix of France. The 8th round of the FIM MXGP Motocross World Championship –proved a disaster after Desalle suffered two crashes during practice and qualification.

Desalle had a problem earlier in the timed Practice session when he clipped a stone and fell. Holding his shoulder, the Belgian – who had set the second-fastest lap-time – needed some attention for discomfort and pain around the joint.

Able to take to the line for the qualification heat Desalle made a good start but felt a twinge in his shoulder after over-jumping a table-top before the finish line. Unfortunately he hit the dirt again immediately after as he was struck by Todd Waters and then once more by Nico Aubin and this led to his retirement and the end of a heavy day.

Nursing his left knee as well as his upper torso Desalle was unsure of his condition to compete on Sunday but left the facility Saturday evening with the goal of trying to compete and take points.

"There is nothing to say," Desalle said at the time. "I'm really sad. Saturday it happened in half-a-second. There was a stone on the take-off and I was on a slow lap. The bike reacted strangely because of the stone and I felt my shoulder go. It was like it came out a little bit but I popped it back immediately. I strapped it and tried to ride in the qualification but did not feel comfortable. I was

scared that on every take-off it might come out because I damaged the muscle again. I don't really have any more words at the moment. I want to say that the track was not at the level for a Grand Prix. When you see the take-offs then it is like it was made yesterday by an amateur. I will see the doctor tomorrow and we will know more. Compared to my other injuries, then it doesn't feel too bad, but I need to see if I have strength in the next few days. I would like to have some scans to see what is going on in there."

Now with nine rounds remaining in the championship Desalle is out of contention. Despite injuries to Antonio Cairoli, Ryan Villopoto and Max Nagl the title is drifting away as Frenchman Romain Febvre continues to build points and Cairoli fights his injuries but continues to score points.

For Desalle it is really another season to look back on with disappointment and know that his title aspirations are running out.

Prior to France Desalle had looked strong and despite not scoring a GP victory in 2015, he was getting close to the series points lead of Nagl. In England

"I had first position in the Qualification Practice and my start was not that bad in the Heat race. I was right behind Nagl when he lost his rear wheel and I had to sit up; I lost a place-or-two to fifth. I got back to second and felt like I could push further but then made a couple of mistakes and the gap was 'elastic' between us. I want a really good start tomorrow. We have a couple of small things to try with the settings to feel more comfortable on the track because you really have to concentrate here. The bike has to be 100%...and the rider also."

Now Desalle can just look back and wonder what might have been. Another season lost to injury. He will be back, he's a fighter and not somebody to give up, but it's going to take a little luck and as he knows, he just doesn't seem to have good luck.



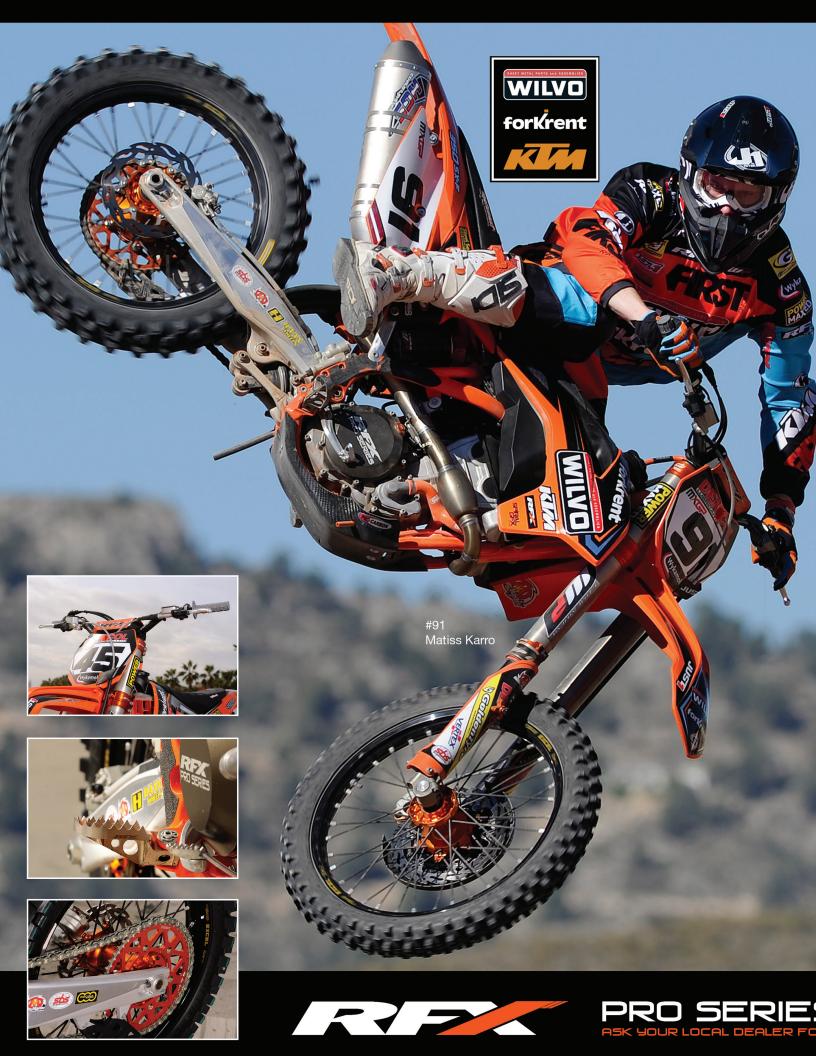


















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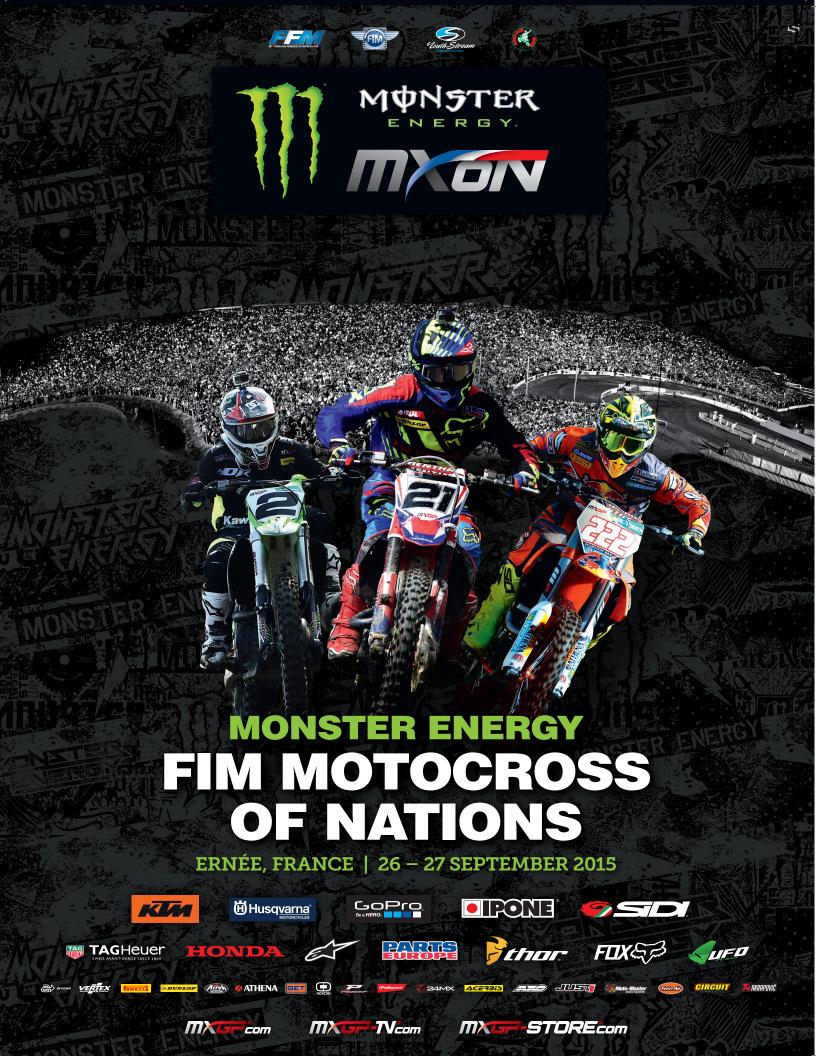




































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COURAGEOUS CHAMPION

STORY GEOFF MEYER IMAGES RAY ARCHER

To say that the 2015 MXGP season to date is unpredictable would be an understatement. When the season started more than three months ago in Doha, Qatar we all looked for the battle between the big four, Antonio Cairoli, Clement Desalle, Ryan Villopoto and Gautier Paulin. What has transpired in that time is GP victories to Cairoli, Villopoto, Paulin, and Max Nagl, plus new boy on the block Romain Febvre? It's been a grind of a different type as nearly all the front runners have picked up serious or minor injuries.

For Antonio Cairoli we said at the start of the season if he wins this year's world championship he will be considered the best GP rider of all time, even surpassing the great Stefan Everts who has at the moment two titles more than the Italian and a bunch more GP wins (around 25 more).

We figured if he could beat Villopoto head to head he deserved some special place in the sport and a ninth championship would be rewards for taking on the best America rider of this era.

But what this year has done is show us just what an incredible champion Cairoli is, and not for his victories, but for his resolve. Despite suffering more crashes in these first 10 rounds than he does in a complete season, and despite suffering painful injuries on more than one occasion he still stands a shot at winning the

MXGP championship. Legends are made from these type of performances and nobody can deny Cairoli is one of the all-time greats, maybe even the smartest rider to ever put his leg over a bike.

Reading through the comments of Cairoli after every single round this season and you realize what a tough season it's been for the Italian hero.

Round 10 - Germany

Antonio Cairoli: It was a difficult Grand Prix but I am satisfied with the result that went beyond my expectations. Especially I'm happy to race two where up to half way I fought at the riders, with the pace the same as the best despite the problem with my arm. Then the pain would not let me hold the handlebars but I still finished sixth. In these two weeks I will continue to work hard to get back into the best physical condition

and I hope to be OK for Uddevalla."

Round nine - Italy

Antonio Cairoli: "It was a very difficult weekend as it was my home GP and got more difficult after my crash in Qualifying. Today my wrist was very painful and the track was rutted and with many bumps so it was not easy with my wrist in this condition. In the first race I started third and tried to stay with the guys but I finished seventh. But in the second race I was feeling bad and my wrist was not holding anymore and my elbow was very painful. I just tried to ride to see if I could get some points. This week I will try to get some intensive treatment and hopefully I will be feeling better next week."

Round eight - France

Tony Cairoli: "It was a difficult weekend for us. I have to say it's positive because we gained two points on Max (Nagl). But I am not happy riding on a track that is so difficult to pass. Lately it is always the starts that are the key. Everything was good in the first moto and my plan was also to have a good start also in the second moto. Unfortunately I had a mistake and I was back at around fifteenth. After the first lap I was already in the top 10 or 12 but after that it was difficult to make up time on the riders in front. There were also a lot of ruts and kickers in the track".

Round seven - England

Antonio Cairoli: "I have a lot of great memories here in England, here I won my first moto at the Motocross of the Nations with 250, long time ago in 2006. I have a lot of fans here, everybody is cheering a lot and you can feel it. I'm really happy, because the weekend went pretty perfect and I will not change nothing. I'm confident about the future, the best is yet to come and I'm really happy that I've made the decision to go on the 450, is much easier to ride compare to the 350, even if I still have to learn a lot how to get faster. I want to wish to Rui Goncalves a good and fast recover, is one of my best friend and I was sad to don't see him racing today."

Round six - Spain

Antonio Cairoli: "I think it is the time to make some changes and get some new motivation. We test a lot with the new 450 and I like it a lot. I was sure I should ride with it from the first race (of the season) but I was not so fit. I still had some injury problems from the Nations (MXoN). The '350' (KTM 350 SX-F) was our 'baby' and we brought it to the top. I won a lot of races and championships with the bike, but it's time for new challenges."





Round five - Holland

Antonio Cairoli: "I came off on one jump in the first moto and I hit my head a bit, and my wrist, but luckily nothing bad. In the second moto I started well, but after a few laps I got a strange feeling in my hand and for most of the 25 minutes I could only ride with one hand. It was very risky in some places and very difficult. I don't think it's anything serious but we are going to check and we have a couple of weeks to rest."

Round four - Italy

Tony Cairoli: "The first race was very good but I would like to win the first GP for the Italians here. I tried to keep Max behind me but it was a very close race between four of us. I tried to get a good start in the second race but Max was quicker and he just pulled away in the first laps. I saw a lot of crashes during the race, the track was very sketchy and it was easy to crash so I didn't really like it. It's not one of my better tracks but I was better this year than last."

Round three - Argentina

Antonio Cairoli: I felt good, my condition was good, I passed Clement, but he passed me back. I actually hit my head pretty hard in that first moto crash. I was top give in the start and Max was riding well, and he deserves this GP. We need to work better. I am not completely in good shape, but everything is going to plan.

Round two - Thailand

Antonio Cairoli: "I made some mistakes over the weekend, especially in the qualifying. Then in the race you need to have a good start to be in front and you need to be on the inside on the corner and that was very important. I was a bit too wide with my seventh place then I got pushed to the outside. I had to regroup and settle my speed but after I went outside the track I was back at about seventeenth and I tried to charge to be in front again. It was not bad to end up fifth but not what I expected from my race. Then I was able to get a good start in my second race to be out in front and to make a good rhythm on a track that was very dangerous. I like jumps but this was way too much and also some were very sketchy. It was very hot and you are not completely focuses so it's very easy to make a mistake."

Round one - Qatar

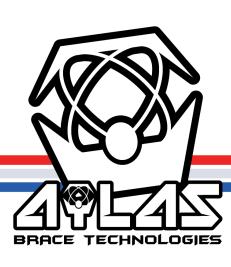
It was a tough night in Qatar for the first round of the championship. Going 3-4 tonight wasn't what I hoped for. Third for me was good on a track that is not one of my favorites, a track that was hard and slippery and sketchy in some places. I didn't really enjoy it.











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Soon after Everts retired Josh Coppins nearly gave them a world title before unluckily before losing a championship that really belonged to him. A year later Philippaerts rode an awesome season to win the MX1 title, but since then it's been slim pickings for the Yamaha factory team.

Of course the 2014 season Jeremy Van Horebeek rode a very impressive to finish second in the world behind Antonio Cairoli and pick up a bunch of podium finishes, but still, second place is still the first loser.

Having gone 6-7-3-4 for the opening four motos of the MXGP class in 2015 French rider Romain Febvre began to be seen as the dark horse for podium finishes, but nobody could have expected him to win the last three GP's in France, Italy and Germany.

Last weekend in Germany Febvre just continued on his merry way, racking up solid lap times and pushing close to his limit. With the GP victory he also took over the red plate, and now the championship challenge gets serious. Although the Frenchman doesn't take it so seriously, not just yet anyway.

"Having the red plate is really nice but this is the tenth GP and there are still sixteen races to go. There is something like four hundred points still up for distribution so we need to keep consistent. Dean was difficult to pass today and in the second moto we had a nice battle with Gautier but I knew I needed second to win the GP so I made sure of that until the end. We had a lot of crashes this weekend and this is not only because of the riders but the track preparation. They put too much water on the track before our race. We need to take risks for nothing. We have the red plate...but there are eight GPs to go and anything can happen...like we saw this weekend

At the magnificent Maggiora circuit in Italy Febvre looks solid, and despite a massive crash and a bent bike continued on to win the GP. It was a sign that he would do anything to get the win, and it really reminded me of the way Antonio Cairoli went abou his business.

"I was really happy to win my second GP in a row and it is great for the team and for Yamaha on their 60th anniversary. It was definitely nice. The first moto was pretty good. I made a good start and was second but after two or three laps I was in the lead. It was pretty easy to be at the front. In the second moto the start was not so good and it was hard to pass. With Simpson we came together on a jump and I had to change the





line quickly and made a mistake. I had a huge crash; so I was happy already with this GP that I could come away uninjured. I was able to keep pushing for the GP victory. My handlebar was very bent and it was hard on the right hand corners to put my leg out. I had no front brake so you can imagine how difficult the downhill was on this track. After the crash the main focus was to still win the GP so I kept pushing until the end and it paid off."

Winning his home Grand Prix in France and Febvre got his first taste of major success in the MXGP class. Instead of resting on his laurels it seems he was just starting something really impressive.

"It is so crazy to win a Grand Prix at home in France. I will enjoy this moment for sure. Last week I won my first heat. It has also been good for the championship. I'm sorry for Clement and his injury; it is not so nice but it is part of racing. It has been good for me and I'm close to third place now. A big thanks to the team for all their work; we've done this together."

Febvre profile

This feisty and stylish Frenchman is one of the exciting new additions to the MXGP category for 2015 and again gives Yamaha Factory Racing Yamalube two strong riders in the premier class this season. Febvre has been on the radar for many works teams since coming back to motocross at the beginning of the decade.

The 23 year old had originally swapped knobbly tyres for Supermoto treads in a career change as a teenager but decided that off-road is where he true talents lay and demonstrated as much by winning the 2011 European Championship; the traditional feeder series into Grand Prix.

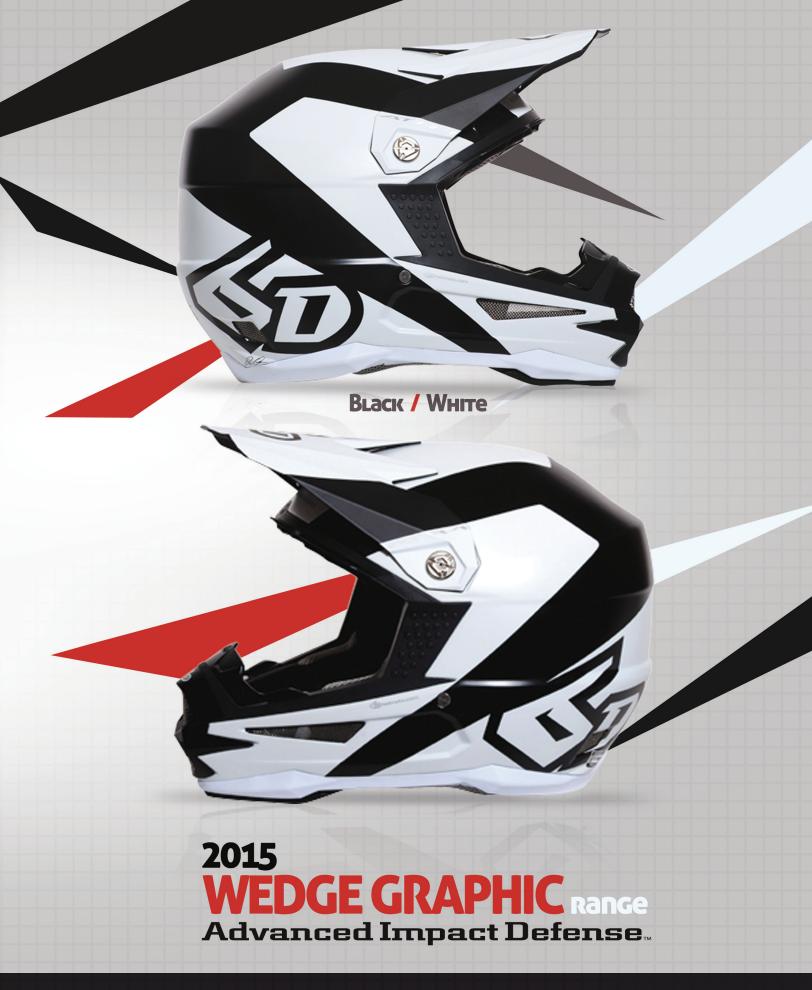
A first full MX2 term in 2012 delivered a promising thirteenth place and at the first round of 2013 he obtained his maiden podium finish. A broken leg dented his point tally that year and he ended the championship in twelfth but having established his position as one of the protagonists of the division.

In 2014 he was a top five regular, scoring two pole positions, three podium appearances and a fantastic milestone Grand Prix win in the heat of Brazil. He was third overall. Still learning his possibilities at world championship level, Romain now has found his speed and groove on the larger 450cc machine but has the bravery, aggression and resilience to make an impact at his first attempt? It sure looks like it.



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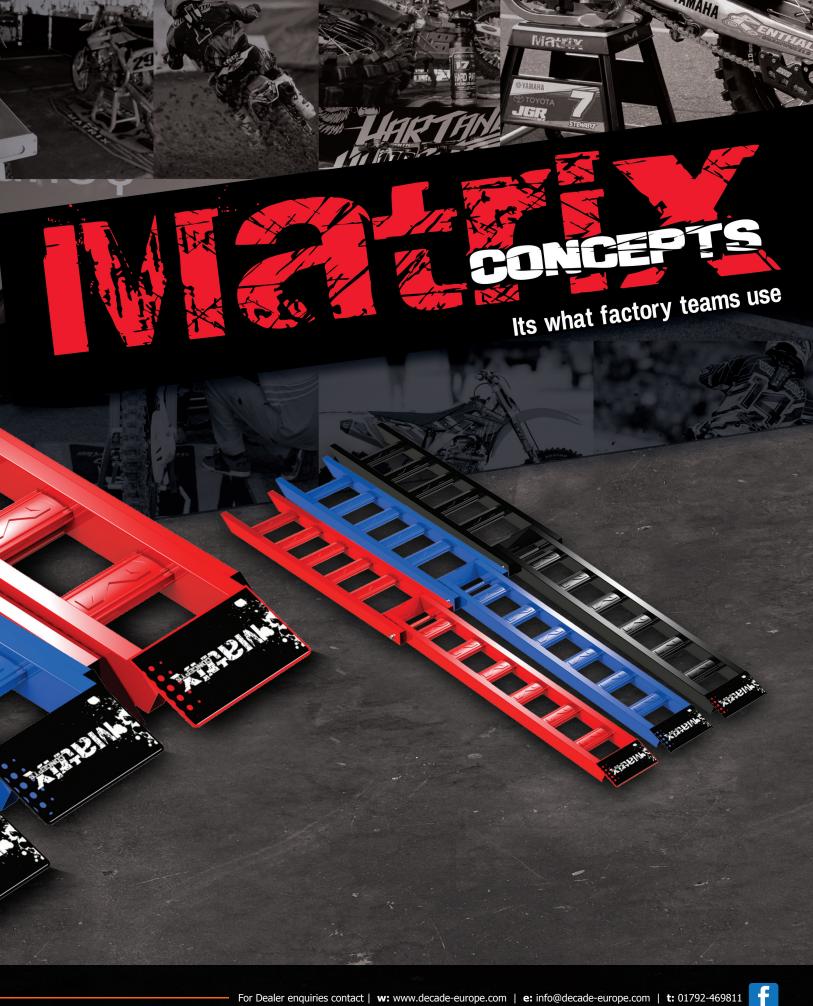




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